

What does Starrett City mean to me – describe my personal experiences living here.

I have lived in the ENY section of Brooklyn for about 50 years. I lived in the Cypress Hills city projects for about 20 years. I remember that letters had gone out checking for the public's interest if a condominium or cooperative development were to be built on the vacant land by Jamaica Bay. Eventually, the decision was made to build affordable housing, Starrett City. My son, who had seen the Starrett development go up, asked me why we couldn't live there. I told him that it was not affordable for us. When I did go and see the model apartments with him, I too was determined that my son and I would live here. At the time, my rent in Cypress Hills was \$155, and moving to Starrett would cost \$285 for a two-bedroom apartment with a terrace. I knew I had to do what was necessary, saved and cut corners to make sure that if the interview process went successfully, I would be able to manage this. I saw the model apartments in 1975 and in 1976, my son and I moved into the development.

Starrett City is my home, plain and simple. My family has always been happy and content here. My teenage son grew up, married and got his own apartment here in Starrett, where he raised his daughter. As a teenager, my granddaughter got her first job at Starrett City. I got involved in all the activities such as the Judo Club, the teen Basketball group, The Lions Club, and within five years I became involved with the Starrett City Tenants Association, Inc.

Coming to Starrett in my mid-forties let me feel like I had a second chance at providing a good lifestyle for my family, and thirty years later, I feel that I have succeeded. I was working full time at Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A., where I eventually became an Assistant Treasurer. I was able to commute to work on a private bus line (now being run as MTA express bus service into Manhattan). Shopping was convenient; I felt that I was providing properly for my family and quality of life was great. My son and I knew that once we crossed over Flatlands Avenue, we were safe thanks to the private security in place at Starrett.

As the time came, I retired from the bank, but they would eventually call me back for a five year consultant engagement. I became more active with the tenants association, and was the building representative for 175 Ardsley Loop for quite a long time.

Main Concerns about the sale of the development – how do my neighbors feel?

My main concern with the sale of Starrett City is the changes that clearly will have to occur. I don't see how the rent would stay affordable. I'm very concerned about the services that are in place such as maintenance, security and the accessibility to management. My neighbors have expressed the same concerns. There are many unknowns, and that makes people nervous, resistant and apprehensive. It is very difficult to engage such an audience.

Quality of Life – Have I enjoyed living here – How will the sale impact my quality of life?

My quality of life is excellent, as I've indicated before. Something as simple as a terrace and a garage to park safely gives me so much pride – and I'm renting; I feel like an owner. I am concerned about the services being cut, particularly security and maintenance. If one needed repairs within their apartment, a simple phone call to the maintenance office was all that had to be done; maintenance scheduled an appointment for the repairs to be made.

Public Service (Security) is also on call for all situations of unbelievable occurrence. I recall having a personal medical situation, and before EMS could arrive on the scene, the Starrett security officers were with me, comforting me, and I felt so safe knowing that this was possible because of where I lived.

To further the quality of life issue, I also think that the relationship among the tenants should be noted. Again, I had a personal experience tied to my medical emergency that I just spoke of, where I was bedridden for approximately three months. My next door neighbor, who has roots back to Russia, literally prepared and fed me breakfast for my entire time of disability. She cared for me every single day. This type of "country-like" atmosphere can only be fostered

in a neighborhood where the tenants truly care for each other, and will step up and treat each other with the respect and dignity that one would find in a family.

As far as the sale is concerned, I don't see how a \$1.3 billion price tag could not affect my quality of life. Where is the money coming from to pay for the services if so much is being paid for the development? How many people will be forced to move, thus changing the entire mix of the Starrett community?

Will I experience a rent increase? Will I be able to continue to reside in the development?

I have to believe that I will definitely get a rent increase. Depending on the percentage, it's doubtful that I could remain here. I am already paying 30% of my income. A high increase would definitely affect my ability to reside in the home that I have been in for over thirty years.

What will happen if the current owner opts out of Mitchell Lama or pre-pays the mortgage?

I think there will definitely be a change to the subsidies. I don't have enough detail about Mitchell Lama, but the owner opting out of the program clearly cannot be beneficial to the tenants participating in the programs. I am currently a participant in the RAP program, and do not know if this program will stay in effect.

As far as pre-paying the mortgage, I don't have enough information to testify to this.

Truth be told, I do not know who holds the mortgage right now. ^{we were} I was thrown into a situation and ^{up where} I'm learning day by day as to the rules, regulations, and repercussions behind the sale, housing laws, etc.

Management did assure us, however, that Starrett City would not be sold back in September 2006. They also said that 90% of tenants would NOT be affected. However, in December of 2006, just before the holidays, we learned on the news that a deal was being made to sell the development. We had three meetings at this time with Carol Dean representing

her husband/owner Disque Dean, their nephew Kurt Dean who apparently is managing the business operations, and their lawyer Harold Kuplesky. They each appeared at different meetings – we never met with them at the same time, but Mr. Kuplesky was present at all three meetings.

How has the STA been involved in discussions surrounding affordability in Starrett City?

The STA has and continues to meet with ACORN. The members of the STA board went to many meetings pertaining to the different subsidies; we have met with housing authorities and Mitchell Lama representatives. We have read an overwhelming amount of documents, solicited help and advice from others more knowledgeable in these matters; those that we felt were in a position to help and make a difference. We have sought out and reached many politicians who have given us support and made their staff and themselves available to us and the tenants at scheduled "town hall" meetings.

To what extent has resident involvement been solicited into plans submitted by Clipper Equities?

One single meeting which basically consisted of a PowerPoint presentation was set up by Clipper Equities, ACORN, and the office of the City Council. Clipper, however, didn't say much of anything that yielded any constructive information in the opinion of the STA, but they did promise further meetings, none of which materialized. I personally received two phone calls from Mr. Bruce Teitelbaum, a consultant for Clipper, where he requested a meeting with the tenants. I presented this to the STA board for a vote, and the board denied the meeting, because we felt that up to this point, Clipper was being less than transparent, and nothing productive would come of a meeting. If they could not give the STA board clear answers, presenting this type of presentation to the tenants would more than likely cause more angst. Tenants were already feeling nervous and concerned about the lack of information.

How should Starrett be kept affordable? How should residents be involved?

The first thing that is pertinent to the tenants is the immediate end to the secrecy by the owners and potential buyer – transparency is critical. There should be notices available to the tenants – just like we have right now when they want to inform us of rent increases. The Starrett Tenants Association is willing to work with management to keep tenants in the loop. This is very, very important.

I think we should acknowledge that a sale is inevitable. It should also be expected that some things will change; what we in Starrett have grown used to will change. However, retention of all subsidy programs should be a priority.

Because of the situation I believe has now been created by the owners and the potential buyer, there is a strain on our relationship with management, which has never been present before. I feel that management is being placed in a situation where their hands are tied.

Even though we know changes are going to occur, we will continue to work for affordable housing, our basic rights as tenants and services